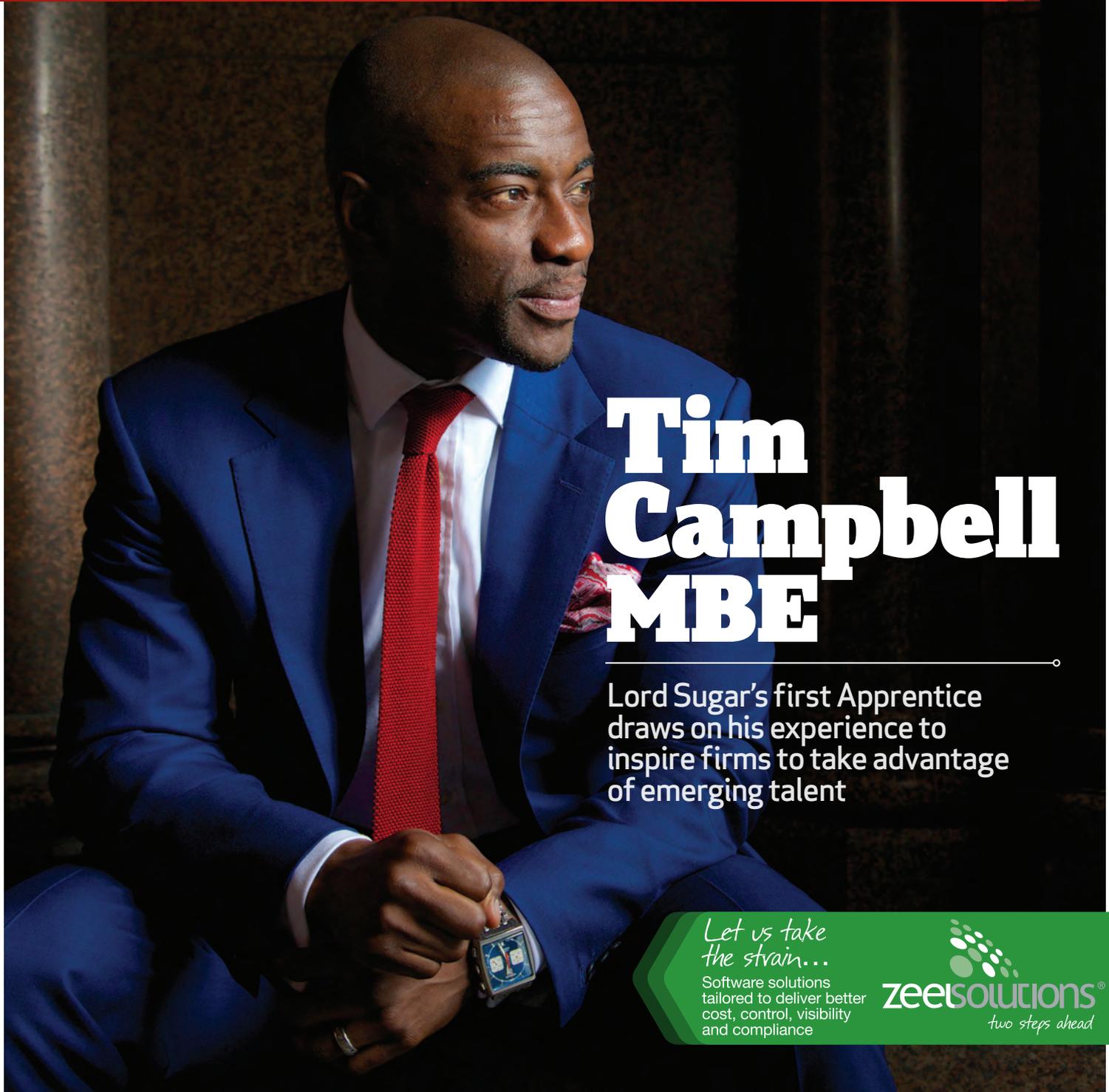


Recruiter

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Tim Campbell MBE

Lord Sugar's first Apprentice draws on his experience to inspire firms to take advantage of emerging talent

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Tim Campbell

DEEDEE DOKE SPOKE WITH THE HEAD OF CLIENT SERVICES FOR EMERGING TALENT AT AMS

Much of the UK knows Tim Campbell MBE as the winner of the first series of the groundbreaking BBC TV reality show *The Apprentice*, which landed the former London Underground recruiter a £100k job with Lord Alan Sugar.

Eight years on, Campbell has turned that role inside out and become an evangelist for apprenticeships in a new position with recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) specialist Alexander Mann Solutions (AMS). As head of client services for emerging talent, Campbell says he has "a grand title" and a mission to build an AMS business specifically designed to capitalise on the potential of young people and youth employment — not only in the UK but overseas as well.

"For too long," Campbell says, "it [being an apprentice] has been seen as a second-tier career — almost that it's what you do if you can't make it into university.

"It used to be," he continues, "that if you were called an apprentice, that was something to be highly regarded. It was a gold standard, a stamp of approval from someone who had taught you something, a set of specific skills which allowed you to go off and generate an income for yourself or to go and gain employment somewhere else in another organisation." A bit like Campbell's own prestigious experience with Lord Sugar, one might think.

Apprenticeships can again be seen as the 'gold standard' for the recruitment of youth into organisations, he contends.

Arguably, apprenticeships are the UK business issue du jour. The halo around a university education has dimmed — for both young people contemplating their futures and for employers — because of increased university fees, a volatile economy and a growing national realisation that a university degree does not guarantee either employability or demonstrable workplace skills. Then there is the need for UK businesses to grow their staff, but not by jeopardising fragile bottom lines.

As a result, Campbell goes on to say, employers are starting to look more closely at "this very competitive space for young people and rearing away from strictly looking at university entrance schemes and milk rounds and now looking in other directions to find out where they can find enthusiastic, bright young people".

And that's where his five-month-old job at AMS comes in.

Campbell and I talk at AMS's central London headquarters at Waterhouse Square on a rather humid day. We are both incredulous when it turns out that we share links to the same quasi-anonymous German city — Kaiserslautern, best known for its

football club if it is known at all. And he speaks in glowing terms of his mother, who makes a mean rum cake and looms large as his role model and hero in his life.

It's been a busy eight years for the animated, bright-eyed and quick-to-laugh Campbell. Following his 2005 win on *The Apprentice*, he worked with Lord Sugar until 2007. He then went on to establish the entrepreneurial social enterprise Bright Ideas Trust, which encourages prospective young entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds to start business ventures. At that time, he famously announced that he wanted to launch 365 new businesses in a year through providing expertise and start-up capital to the next generation of young entrepreneurs.

He's also co-written a business book, *What's Your Bright Idea?* Plus, London Mayor Boris Johnson appointed Campbell the capital's Ambassador for Training and Enterprise, and across party lines, secretary of state Vince Cable also saw fit to appoint him to a special role of enterprise advisor.

Oh, and he also serves as vice chairman on the board of governors at his local school in East London. Then there's his work with the niche investment and development consultancy, Estate Office Property Consultants. And what about the corporate finance studies he undertook at London Business School?

Why, I ask Campbell, did he return to school after working with Lord Sugar? Campbell himself describes working with Lord Sugar as "my real-life MBA". But even before he became TV's first Apprentice, he had already earned a psychology degree at Middlesex University.

"I'll be honest with you," he says. "I've always had an inferiority complex. I've always had this thing, coming from East London, that I've never had stuff [knowledge] that is as good as everyone else.

"But what it has done for me, based on what Mum taught us," he continues, "was that I worked twice as hard, and I worked really, really hard to get the stuff that I want. And I'll overdo it based on I don't want to ever let the mask slip and have people think, 'oh, you are a fool, you can't do stuff'. I was never the cleverest at school, but I left with all my GCSEs, did a degree at university and all those other things."

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

"I WORK BLOODY HARD, THAT'S THE SECRET, AND IF THAT'S A SECRET THEN MOST PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IT BECAUSE IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE. HARD WORK IS THE PREREQUISITE OF SUCCESS"

CAMPBELL'S PHILOSOPHY

"Constant learning and empowering others"

CV

FEB 2013 – PRESENT: Head of client services, emerging talent, AMS

2012 – Made an MBE for services to Enterprise Culture

JUNE 2007 – PRESENT: Founder and director, Bright Ideas Trust. Chairman (2012-13) and CEO (2007-12).

2005-07: Project director, Amstrad

2005: Winner, BBC TV's *The Apprentice*

2000-05: Various roles including graduate trainee, recruitment consultant and senior planner, Transport for London

EDUCATION:

Corporate Finance Portfolio, London Business School; BSc (Hons) Psychology, Middlesex University



PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD LEA HAIR



There was, Campbell admits, a certain “bit of vanity” involved with studying at the London Business School. But in addition to the deepened knowledge and exposure to a level of teaching he describes as “just so incredible”, his personal confidence grew.

He further realised that employers must do more through sponsorships and bursaries to help young people access similarly high-level learning and the professional networks that come with it.

Campbell points out the link between education and social mobility, and says one of his aims is to ensure that social mobility “is at the heart of everything I do”.

His new venture with AMS supports that cause in a different direction than his first post-Lord Sugar effort. The Bright Ideas Trust was established “specifically to help those who were the most disadvantaged to set up to run their own companies, to create wealth”, he says.

“But the reality was, you are only ever going to get certain amounts of people who are going to take that entrepreneurial leap, who are going to be comfortable with risking everything, working non-9-to-5 hours and understanding that it takes a long time to get that true link between effort and reward if you have to build something up.”

Now with AMS, Campbell believes he is on track to help many more people climb the social mobility ladder, “and the easiest way to do that is to get a job”.

And it is not only the socially disadvantaged who can benefit from AMS clients’ embracing of apprenticeships. “What I can offer is a sensible alternative for a growing minority that do not want to go down the sausage machine of a formalised education piece and who might be better gifted at working from day one with an employer that they can get their hands dirty with,” Campbell says.

“Now,” he adds, “I am not talking about trades, I am not talking about welders; I’m talking about now we have apprenticeship programmes for stockbrokers, we have it for those in the financial industry, we have it for those in creative fields. So there is a huge growth of energy and enthusiasm in these fields.

“But there is a lack of structured jobs for them,

and employers have been holding back in the current economy because they are not too sure about what the future looks like.”

AMS’s thrust toward greater deployment of apprenticeships is intended to cross UK boundaries and serve clients around the world. Campbell has recently spent time on a road trip to the US where his stops included Minneapolis and Portland, Oregon, to explore future opportunities to develop apprentice programmes. While the US has not traditionally been a hot bed of apprenticeship activity, Campbell believes the tide is also turning there in favour of such an approach to early career programmes.

On a day-to-day level, Campbell’s work might involve consulting with an AMS client about “what schools to target and how to make a difference in those” and devising a bespoke apprenticeship framework, he says.

While Campbell cannot yet reveal the names of clients that are buying into AMS’s and his expanded vision of future talent, he says that defence, logistics and telecommunications firms are poised to explore the potential of apprenticeships. “What we are finding is, employers are saying much more: ‘Look at my organisation, look at my plans for the future and then work backwards to see how you can help me find the best talent to meet the future requirements,’” he explains.

Campbell knows that his win on *The Apprentice* gave his own career an unusually high-profile boost. Based on that experience, what advice would he give young people about to enter the world of work?

“If you were to ask me if I would do it [participate in *The Apprentice*] again, I would say probably not unless I knew I was going to win,” he says. “I am very passionate about telling the young people we now work with, what you need to do is: invest in things that are going to grow exponentially in your personal bank account, which are a great education, great friends and a great support network around you.

“Because if you invest it in all of those, you don’t need a television programme to jump you up.”

“I’VE ALWAYS HAD AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX. I’VE ALWAYS HAD THIS THING, COMING FROM EAST LONDON, THAT I’VE NEVER HAD STUFF [KNOWLEDGE] THAT IS AS GOOD AS EVERYONE ELSE”